# OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

# CONFERENCE

OF

## THE REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., L.L.D., F.R.S.E.

WITH CERTAIN

## MINISTERS AND ELDERS OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

BY

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# OBSERVATIONS, &c.

Dr. Patrick M'Farlan assumed, in one of his late letters, that the proposal for putting Dr. Lee in nomination for the Chair of the General Assembly, 1837, had originated at breakfast and dinner parties held in St. Andrew Square and Melville Street during the month of May 1836. I could easily have removed this impression from the mind of my reverend friend, by assuring him that no such parties were held at my house either in that month or at any other time; and that I never had attended, or so much as heard of any similar meetings having been held any where else. But although I was not blind to the advantage which he might derive as a controversialist, from the implication conveyed in the insinuation, viz. that the whole matter was a political movement, set on foot by Dr. Welsh and myself, I had too great an aversion to controversy, and too firm a reliance on the answer which I thought was afforded, by the fact of our being united in this matter with others whose political opinions are diametrically opposed to ours, to deem it worth while to disturb either Dr. M'Farlan or myself by a correspondence. I therefore determined to let the affair pass over in silence, in so far as I was individually concerned.

Matters, however, have been placed in so different a position by the singular production which the Rev. Dr. Chalmers has thought proper to publish, under the rather inappropriate name of a *Conference*, that I could not remain silent any longer, unless I were prepared to surrender at once every claim which I may ever have possessed to respect or confidence, either as a man, a gentleman, or a Christian, and to yield up my character an unresisting prey to what he affects to consider his duty in the headlong pursuit of a favourite cause. That cause, which Dr. Chalmers knows I have taken many opportunities of supporting, I hope I shall not be suspected of attacking, when I temperately, but firmly, endeavour to repel the unjust and injurious aggressions of its advocate.

The style, and structure, and management of the "Conference," are all of them singular. They all proclaim the zealous, but I fear it will be found, not the judicious controversialist. Every little circumstance is laid hold of. Every advantage, no matter what its nature, or at what violation of the confidences, the courtesies, or even the common decencies of life, is eagerly seized upon. And the whole is clothed in language which I do not choose to characterise in all its peculiarities; but the arrogance of which, at least, I shall endeavour to abstain from imitating.

One remarkable feature which cannot fail to have attracted the notice of every reader of the "Conference," is the unsparing imputation of motives, the truth of which its author *cannot* possibly know, and the strength,

and severity, and consequences of which he entirely disregards. To give some plausibility to these imputations, the Rev. Doctor has amused himself with the assumption of various matters of fact, which I pledge myself to be not merely unfounded, but palpably the reverse of the truth. He says he does not know whether he is to be accused of imaginativeness or malignity. I shall accuse him of neither. It is enough for me that I am made the chief object of his attack. And I speak advisedly when I say, that when he put those most offensive passages together, he neither knew, nor endeavoured to learn, either what my motives had been, or what were the actual facts of the case, on which he took it upon him to decide. He cared not whether they were known to him or not. They are boldly and recklessly assumed to be true, because he wishes that they should be so; and they are mercilessly and unsparingly proclaimed, because he believes that, in some way or other, they may tend to the support of his cause. He cares not whose feeling may be lacerated by his charges; and he cares not whose character may be ruined in the contest.

Such are the feelings which seem to have prompted the unexpected attack which Dr. Chalmers has thought proper to make upon me. It is some consolation to find myself joined in these anathemas with numerous friends whose very names are sufficient to vouch for the honesty, at least, of any cause. But mine is entirely a case of self-defence. I am unfortunately promoted to so distinguished an eminence, that I have no choice but to meet the charge. He says, he has "counted the cost, and I find my cause to be worthy of martyrdom." I have been challenged to meet him "on the arena of an open and fearless warfare." I accept the challenge with pain; but he compels *me* also to disregard the cost. The challenge is one which I cannot decline; and if the issue be different from what he seems to expect, at his door must the consequences be laid.

The declared, and originally, I doubt not, the real object of my reverend *antagonist*, as he calls himself, was to prevent the election of the Reverend Dr. Lee to the office of Moderator of the Church of Scotland for the year 1837. For this purpose, after what had passed both in last Assembly and out of doors, it was necessary to find some tangible ground of objection to his conduct, his character, or his opinions. The conviction entertained of his general qualifications by the Church at large; and the knowledge possessed by all who had been in the habit of attending to the conduct of business in Edinburgh, of the services he had rendered, and the sacrifices he had made for her benefit, made this a hopeless, or at least a difficult task to accomplish, according to any usual course of proceeding. But my reverend antagonist, with his usual ingenuity, has called to mind certain preconceived opinions of his own as to the manner in which Dr. Lee has been accustomed to give evidence, not merely now, but it is said on all occasions. Farther, he could not but be aware that there were certain minor points of detail in which Dr. Lee, although concurring heartily in the great scheme of Church Extension, differed from himself. And he seems to have hoped that he might be able to extract some passages from the Doctor's evidence before the Church Commission, which would assist him in his object of preventing his appointment to the Moderator's chair.

With this view, Dr. Chalmers applied to one of the Commissioners,

and afterwards to the Secretary to the Board, for a copy of the printed evidence relative to the Presbytery of Edinburgh; and I regret that, owing to an oversight, no answer was returned to that letter. But I can assure him, the seeming unpoliteness was not intentional, for I drew out an answer with my own hand at the first meeting of the Board after its receipt. I there explained that a Royal Commission was not entitled to show the evidence till they received his Majesty's commands to that effect. And I am surprised that a gentleman so much accustomed to public business as Dr. Chalmers, should not himself have known that such must be the rule in all cases of the kind; or that knowing it, he should have availed himself of a pretended ignorance to accuse me of "a self-imposed system of secrecy" "to protect myself from exposure." It is a rule adopted by committees of Parliament, and obviously indispensable to the discharge of public business, as well as called for by respect to the authority under which the evidence is obtained. It could not have been departed from in the case of Dr. Chalmers, without giving an equal right to many hundred witnesses already examined, and to the hundreds of others yet to come before us, to make similar demands. This explanation must satisfy every one not merely of the existence of the rule, but of the absolute necessity of abiding by it, unless we had been prepared to let all who chose to impede or embarrass our proceedings, have full opportunity of doing so. Nor need I stop to point out the use which might be made of such opportunities by ill-disposed persons, when it appears that Dr. Chalmers himself wanted the evidence for purposes foreign to the object of our appointment, and of the investigations in which we had been engaged.

I say nothing more at present of the evidence on a matter not then reported upon, being "secreted from the eyes of the Church, and treasured up for the use of the Government." It is a mere rhetorical artifice, not worthy of the celebrity of Dr. Chalmers; and one which, if his cause had been good, he would never have employed. The fact is undoubtedly as he states it, that he did not get the evidence *from the Commissioners*. That he has got it in some way, it would be no difficult matter to prove, if I were at liberty to enter into the details. Such proof, however, would be of no consequence at all to the real question between Dr. Chalmers and myself. Besides he has pledged himself to the utmost for the correctness of the account of it which he has given. And, at any rate, the same motives of expediency which occasioned the rule I have mentioned, debar the Commissioners from stating such particulars publicly. I also am precluded from making any use of the evidence; for what we cannot show to the parties, we are not entitled to publish ourselves. For the present, therefore, Dr. Chalmers must be satisfied with what he has got—which, after all, gives him a material advantage over Dr. Lee, whose application for a sight even of his own evidence, has been refused by the Board. The truth is, however, that Dr. Chalmers has suffered no inconvenience from the alleged want of the evidence; for, although he pledges himself for the accuracy of his quotations, I have no doubt he flatters himself that he has a theme left to fall back upon, should it appear, as appear it will, that he has committed numerous and altogether unaccountable mistakes.

In an after part of this paper it will be my duty to say, whether the extracts which Dr. Chalmers has given from his copy of Dr. Lee's evidence, are accurate or not. But it would seem that he does not feel alto-

gether secure of their efficiency for the purpose which he has at pre sent in view; otherwise it is not easy to account for the next device which I find it incumbent upon me to notice. I mean the attempt he has made to connect Dr. Lee with myself, as the Procurator for the Church, and me with the Government of the country. Neither is it easy to see, why, if the Reverend Doctor's cause is a good one, there was any occasion either for running down the Government, or for fastening upon me the disgraceful and scandalous charges which he has made against me.

It may tend to perspicuity to state what appears to be the chain and process of this singular reasoning.

1. The Government is hostile to the Church of Scotland. It has already more than once disappointed the just expectations of the country, by indefinite postponements of the great cause of Church Extension. And it is still determined and anxious to do so whenever it may suit its convenience.

2. Dr. Lee has broken what has been called "the clerical unanimity, which would else have stood forth in one entire and unbroken array against the Government." He is therefore to be rewarded by our procuring for him the chair of Moderator, when, it is said, he is to render farther and still more important services. This is assumed throughout the pamphlet to have been the cause, and *the only cause* of Dr. Lee having been proposed as a candidate for the Moderator's Chair.

3. I am the person chosen by the Government for the accomplishment of this very desirable object, and I have set myself to the task with a degree of *dexterity*, which, if it were true, would expel me at once from society and from my profession: And, at the same time, with a degree of skill and ability, which has misled such "kind and amiable, but withal simple hearted clergymen," as Dr. Gordon, Dr. Dickson, and Mr. Candlish; and such clear-sighted lawyers as Mr. Whigham and Mr. Walter Cook. I do not well know where Dr. Welsh, Mr. More, Mr. Monteith, Mr. Dunlop, and Mr. Cowan are ranked, nor does it signify whether I misled them too, or whether they have walked, like myself, into the plot, with their eyes open.

There are many other charges, and sub-divisions of charges, which it seems unnecessary to particularise. Those which I have specified, substantially embrace the whole plan of the work, which the Reverend Doctor has thought proper to publish. They are so intermingled with each other, that it were difficult to treat any of them singly. It must be seen at once, that they contain such imputations against me as no gentleman can contentedly submit to. If, in the course of the observations which it will be my duty to offer, I shall have occasion to speak of the other arties accused, it is with my own vindication that I am chiefly concerned. And I am very confident that it shall be so conducted as to command the assent of every candid and unprejudiced mind.

I may, however, notice here, an artifice of an opposite kind,—for Dr. Chalmers is a practised controversialist,—which he has had the address to employ in his pamphlet. Not contented with mixing up those, whom he calls his *antagonists*, with every thing that is mean and base and contemptible, he tries to identify himself with all that is high, and honourable, and desirable in the cause which he has so artfully introduced into this debate. He knows the deep interest which the cause of

Church Extension has excited. Hence he himself and the Church Extension Scheme are identified. Any opposition, as he calls it, to him, must in some way or other be injurious to that object. Friendship to Dr. Lee is enmity to him, and enmity to him must lead to the defeat of the scheme. Nay, he scarcely appears to consider even the scheme itself worth carrying, unless it be carried exactly in his own way. Any one who differs from him, even in the most trifling particular, must therefore at all hazards be destroyed. Above all, he affects to consider the intention of proposing Dr. Lee for Moderator as a mark of personal hostility to himself. And therefore, it is necessary to say that I neither acknowledge his right to identify himself with the Church Extension scheme, nor with the Church Extension Committee, the majority of the *acting* members of which are ranged on the side of Dr. Lee. And I particularly deny that in supporting that gentleman I was actuated by any feeling of enmity against Dr. Chalmers. The plain truth is that the idea of Dr. Chalmers never entered my mind when I first took up the cause of Dr. Lee,—that it never occurred to me either to enquire or conjecture what his sentiments on the matter might be,—and that it was with a stronger feeling than surprise that I first heard, after a considerable lapse of time, of *the evolutions* that he had been *performing* with a view to defeat the pretensions of Dr. Lee.

But to return to the subject matter of the Conference. I commence by observing, that I have nothing to do with the political opinions of Dr. Chalmers, although I think doubts may be entertained of the correctness of his own profession, that he himself no more thinks of politics than of the veriest reptile in his way. But I do complain of the inference which he endeavours to draw from the fact, that many or most of the Commissioners are supporters of the present Government. He himself, or one of his friends, told the Commission of Assembly, that it was natural the Church Commission should be so composed; and I complain of the uncharitable principle he evinces, in now taking for granted, that *because* this is the case, *therefore* their conduct must necessarily have been dishonest. Of this I affirm, he is unable to produce the shadow of a proof, and I ask, if it is like that "charity which thinketh no evil," to traduce the characters of men, of whom he knows nothing, on the mere possibility,—or worse, on the "*malignant*" supposition,—that such may have have been the case. I state this challenge boldly, because I know that the charge is unfounded. And I state it the more readily, because it must be evident to every one that it has nothing to do with the merits or demerits of Dr. Lee. The supporters of that gentleman may be actuated by the best, or they may be actuated by the basest of motives. But what is all that to the qualifications of the Doctor for the office for which he has been proposed. And is it becoming in a Christian or in a Christian minister, holding the high office which the Doctor now fills in our University, to impute treachery, deceit, and baseness, to any man, or set of men, till he is sure that the charge is well merited?

I ask Dr. Chalmers for his proofs of the truth of this accusation. Does he know what the Commission have done? Does he know what they have not done? I speak not here of their *motives*. All I say is, that I desire him to put his finger on any one act which gives even a ground for suspecting, far less for asserting, that they are actuated by a desire to injure or delay the cause of the Church. I desire him, in the next place, to say,

whether he believes that the Commissioners are all of one way of thinking either as to temporal politics, or as to religious establishments. I am sure at one time he thought we were not. And then I require him to say, whether he believes that the one set of us would have permitted the other to act the base part he now chooses to allege. I desire him, in the third place, to recollect, that our proceedings have been chiefly conducted in public. And, lastly, I say, without fear of denial, that if he could have fixed on a single instance of malversation, the whole tone of his pamphlet demonstrates that he would have proclaimed it without scruple. And I ask what right he had, when he was to be silent as to matters of fact, to hold up the characters of honourable men, to scorn, and obloquy, and reproach.

I enter not into a defence of my own particular views on political subjects. Time was when to be a Whig would not have been matter of reproach in the eyes of a minister of the Church of Scotland. I only say, that Dr. Lee, whose opinions are well known, is not responsible for mine, and that his cause should not be injured in the mind of any candid man by the misfortune of his having my good wishes.

Neither do I enter into a defence of the general conduct of his Majesty's Government, as it has no bearing on the question between us. But there is one point, on which they have been assailed which has such a bearing, on which their defence is most triumphant, and from which Dr. Chalmers shall not escape. I refer to the needless and constant repetition of the charge, that they are anxious to frustrate the demands of the Church of Scotland, and particularly to the passage on page 18, where it is said :— "It is impossible to anticipate what the Government is to do, and therefore I only speak of them hypothetically. Amid the reelings of the Cabinet and the reelings of the country, I will not myself venture on any computation. But it is good to be prepared beforehand ; and should the necessities of their condition again compel your employers *to another postponement of our claims,* you, in the mean time, are diligently constructing for them the best possible apology, by doing all you can, to invest with the authority of office, and clothe with the insignia of a high and honourable distinction, the evidence of Dr. Lee."

Now, I tell Dr. Chalmers, in the first place, that I do not serve the Government in any situation.—That I am not employed by them in any capacity whatever, excepting that of Church Commissioner. That I believe I was appointed to that situation merely because I was in the employment of the Church ; and that I have discharged all the functions of the office gratuitously, at the cost of great labour and discomfort to myself. I tell him, in the next place, and I expect to be believed, that I never have received any private instructions, either with regard to the conduct of the investigation, or as to any other matter with which it is connected. Particularly, I tell him that I have never received any such instructions concerning Dr Lee or the Moderatorship of the General Assembly. I never have had any directions from Government in any shape or in any form, save those which have appeared in all the newspapers, and been officially communicated to the General Assembly of the Church. I never have been directed,—I never have been told,—It never has been hinted or mentioned to me in any shape, by any member of the Cabinet, or by any of their officials, what course it was wished that I should pursue. Even the Lord Advocate and Solicitor-General, with whom my intimacy has now been of no short endurance, have never whispered a word

to me on any of these subjects . And at this moment, I have no reason to believe, far less have I occasion to know, that either of them has any other or greater knowledge of our proceedings than that which every one who resides, as they do, so much in this place, must necessarily have of what occupies so large a share of public attention.

Having said so much, I will add, that I could tell Dr. Chalmers another thing, but Dr. Chalmers would not believe it. At least I am sure he would never admit that he did so. I once hoped otherwise. But the Doctor is still a leader, and he knows it is a maxim in politics still more than in war, that the general *must* never be wrong. I tell it, however, to my readers, that the difficulties of our task were as little known elsewhere as Dr. Chalmers would have it believed they were by himself,—that it was supposed the whole business might be finished in six or eight months,—and that we have been repeatedly and earnestly pressed, both before the last Session of Parliament, and during its sitting, and since it rose, to send up our report upon Edinburgh without delay.

But the question of the views of the Government does not rest here. I ask how Dr. Chalmers can excuse himself for the constantly reiterated charges that they have more than once already disappointed the wishes of the country, and that they are still endeavouring to do so? Why, he himself tells us that it has been the object of his life, for twenty years, to bring matters to the pass at which they now are. Surely if that time was necessary to rouse the people of Scotland to the proper pitch, *some time* should have been allowed to the Government to form its resolution. And what time has the Government taken for that purpose? Would it be believed that it was done more rapidly than perhaps ever happened before, in the most trifling matter which ever was brought under their consideration. Yet such is the fact. And Dr. Chalmers knew that it was the fact, when he composed the passage with which I am at present concerned.

Let my readers observe, therefore, that the very first application to Government for additional endowments was made in July 1834. Mr. Fergusson of Kilkerran, as Chairman of one of the Committees since merged in that for Church extension, informed the Assembly of 1835, that this was the case; that the deputation to London had been favourably received; and that they had even conversed with Lord Brougham, then Chancellor, as to the extent of the demand which ought to be made.

Then mark, in the next place, that in the very same month, Earl Grey resigned his situation of First Lord of the Treasury; and that some time must necessarily have been consumed by the change of departments which followed.

In November of the same year, before the new Government were well settled in their places, and assuredly before any renewed application was made from Scotland, Lord Melbourne and his Cabinet were dismissed from office. Then followed the appointment of Sir Robert Peel, who remained in office till the month of April. Lord Melbourne returned to office in the beginning of May 1835, and in *two months* thereafter, during which time there were two different debates in the House of Commons on the subject, and an address to the Crown was carried, the Royal Commission was appointed.

Was there here any wish for indefinite postponement? How *could* the new Government have proceeded with greater rapidity? And is it not plain that they have been most unjustly and recklessly accused when

they were charged with indefinite postponement, and with disappointing the just hopes of the country?

And let not any one reply that the endowment should have been granted without any enquiry at all. Dr. Chalmers knows well that there was no hope of carrying any measure through the House of Commons without such enquiry. And he also knows, and I think it was Dr. Patrick Macfarlan who stated to the Assembly, that it was *Sir William Rae* who moved that there should be enquiry. The only question raised in Parliament was, whether that enquiry should be by Committee or Commission. And however the Commission may have discharged its duty, no one can doubt that both the delay and expense to the country promised to be less by examining witnesses at their own doors, than by transporting four or five persons from each of 550 parishes, or more than half the parishes in Scotland, to waste their time and be examined in London.

The circumstances which I have now adverted to are so obvious, that I am surprised Dr. Chalmers should have ventured to touch the question as to the conduct of the Government. And if his disclamation of political feelings be as sincere, as no doubt he wishes it to be believed, it is difficult to impute his mentioning the subject at all to any thing but a paltry artifice, for the purpose of catching a few stray votes against Dr. Lee, from gentlemen who are opposed on principle to the Government in their general opinions. Of one thing I am thoroughly persuaded, that the Government have never thought it worth while to entertain any hostility, and certainly they never have "exerted their power" against Dr. Chalmers; and that if any feelings of enmity exist any where, they are entirely confined to the breast of that Reverend Gentleman.

But even all the delinquencies of the Government are not enough to make the Rev. Doctor very confident of his case. The Government may be all that he says it is; but Dr. Lee has never been known as its supporter. Or rather he has been strongly suspected of conservative leanings. Still Dr. Chalmers had to connect him with the Government, and therefore it became necessary to his cause to attribute the whole plan of suggesting him, and the whole task of accomplishing that plan to my machinations.

This charge is stated with such unhesitating confidence, and is repeated again and again in so many shapes, that I should not wonder if it had met with belief among those who are not acquainted with the facts; as it is not likely that any one should suspect, after reading so much, that it is wholly and absolutely without even a shadow of foundation.

I proceed, therefore, in the next place, to explain more precisely than has yet been done, the facts which have occurred with respect to the proposed nomination of Dr. Lee to the Chair of the Assembly; and particularly to describe my own concern in that matter.

My interference, then, began *before* the Church Commission was appointed; before it was known that I was to be a member of it; and, of course, long before Dr. Lee had given the offence he is *said* to have done to Dr. Chalmers, or had made the move to which the Doctor strangely attributes his own change of opinion. I will notice this change of opinion presently. What I wish to be particularly kept in view at present

is, that Dr. Lee was proposed *before* the Church Commission was appointed, and, for any thing I know, before it was even thought of.

Then, let it be observed, that *I was not the proposer of Dr. Lee.* I happen to be opposed to him in opinion, not merely with regard to what I believe to be his civil politics, but with regard to most of the questions which have lately been agitated in our Church Courts. It is true, that when the suggestion of proposing him for Moderator was made, I heartily approved of it. I did so for reasons totally divested either of political feeling or of party differences in the Church. I did so, because I thought then, as I think still, that he was eminently entitled to fill the Chair. I did so, because I thought the Church would disgrace itself if the appointment of so distinguished a Scholar, and so learned a Churchman should be much longer delayed. But it is most certain that it was not with me that the proposition originated.

Neither did I at first know with whom it originated. Something, I believe, was said about it incidentally by some one near the table, in the course of the Assembly 1835 ; possibly by Dr. Welsh. I have reason to believe that Dr. Thomson, who was Moderator that year, expressed a hope that he would have to propose him for his successor in the year 1836 ; and of this I am quite sure, that it was pretty generally understood, by a certain part of the gentlemen who attended the Moderator's dinner, on the day after the rising of that Assembly, that he was to be proposed.

We are now told, however, that sometime during the summer of 1835, Dr. Chalmers himself had written to the late Dr. Grant that Dr. Lee ought to be proposed. Dr. Chalmers does not give us the date of the letter, and it may be that *he* was thus the originator of the proposal. It will be in the judgment of next Assembly, whether he who has deserted, or we who have adhered to that proposal, have acted most consistently with the mind of the Church.

I was restrained by my situation as Procurator, and by the consideration that we did not act with the same party, from taking any immediate steps in favour of Dr. Lee. I did not interest myself much about it ; and, in fact, I believed for some time that the thing was agreed to. Towards the end of the summer, however, I was addressed by a gentleman, decidedly opposed to the Government, who informed me that nothing had been done to carry the intentions I have spoken of into effect. He entered a good deal into the details of the case, and certainly impressed me with a conviction that Dr. Lee would, to use the gentlest phrase, be unhandsomely treated, if something were not done to secure his election. This consideration weighed with me : But I had not then heard who it was intended should be opposed to him ; and in consequence of what was said to me, and in concert with Dr. Gordon, Dr. Welsh, and Mr. More, the two former of whom, if not the last also, had before that time been using a certain degree of influence in favour of Dr. Lee, I wrote, I think, *six letters in all*, to friends in the country.

The first of these was *to Dr. Patrick Macfarlan ;* the second to Dr. Thomson of Perth ; neither of them gentlemen likely to be applied to by any one engaged in hatching plots to forward any sinister views of the present Government. The last mentioned gentleman entered warmly into the views of Dr. Lee's friends. From the answer of the former I first learned with surprise, that the old Moderators had agreed to recommend Dr. M'Leod, and that he (Dr. Macfarlan) and others had already secured the

greater part of the west country in his interest. I was not told then, and I do not know yet who had suggested this proposal. But I had so much respect for the talents and character of Dr. M'Leod, that I regretted having embarked in the matter. This feeling I expressed to several gentlemen at the time; and even thought of addressing Dr. M'Leod himself on the subject; and from the time I received the information I wrote no more letters, excepting *one* in reply to Dr. Macfarlan. In that letter I expressed my regret at *the secrecy* which had been practised by the old Moderators, and I think also at the unpleasant situation in which, from the delicacy of Dr. Lee's feelings, he would be placed, by having been proposed and then unceremoniously withdrawn.

At a later period Dr. Macfarlan was requested to attend the only meeting, so far as I can recollect, that was held of Dr. Lee's friends in that year, in order that measures might be taken for preventing a collision in the Church. The objections which he then stated to Dr. Lee had no reference whatever to the Church Extension Scheme. But it was found impossible to effect any arrangement; and after another interval Dr. Lee was withdrawn by his friends for the purpose of securing unanimity.

Dr. Chalmers has now informed us that *he* had changed his opinion with regard to Dr. Lee, in the interval between his recommendatory letter to Dr. Grant and the period of which I have been speaking; and all other men are at once to be put under the ban of the Church for not changing their opinions *at the same time;* and, must I say it, *for the same reasons.* It is necessary that I should make my readers acquainted with the true history of this change. The account which Dr. Chalmers has himself given of it, is the following.—"The first circumstance which opened my eyes to this danger, was the singular part which Dr. Lee took at the meeting of the Assembly's Commission in September 1835—when it resolved on the all but unanimous expression of its dissatisfaction with the conduct of Government on this very question. He was the only clergyman that grafted a dissent on that resolution, and the only individual who dissented on a particular ground of his own." He adds, in a note, "There was only another member of the Commission who dissented, and he was an Elder." And let it be particularly observed, the passage itself goes on to say, with reference to Dr. Lee, "*what the peculiar ground was it is unnecessary to mention.*"

It is with no wish to make any unnecessary charges against Dr. Chalmers that I advert to this passage. But I have been challenged to show how I could support Dr. Lee, notwithstanding his manifold and well known delinquencies. I am therefore constrained to notice it; and the first observation I have to make is, that it thus appears that the hostility of Dr. Chalmers to Dr. Lee commenced several months *before he delivered any evidence before the Church Commission.*

In the next place, no man can read that passage, and fail to suppose —there can be no doubt Dr. Chalmers meant his readers to believe— that Dr. Lee dissented from the Commission's "all but unanimous expression of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Government." In that expression of dissatisfaction, however, Dr. Lee *concurred,* as Dr. Chalmers, or any one who pleases, may read in the Acts of Assembly.

Again, the "particular and unlooked for evolution" which Dr. Lee is said to have "performed" could not, as Dr. Chalmers pretends, by any possibility have been the occasion of his change of sentiment. For whatever Dr. Chalmers may now think proper to say under shelter of his

assertion that it is *unnecessary to mention* what was the peculiar ground of Dr. Lee's "particular and unlooked for evolution," the plain state of the fact is this. The resolution of the Commission concludes, after its dissatisfaction with Government has been fully expressed, with a declaration that they "approve of such members of the Church as may be required to do so by the Commissioners nominated by his Majesty furnishing accurate information as to all statistical matters," which direction is qualified by the proviso, "It being clearly understood that the Commission of the Assembly hold that it is not competent to the Commissioners to put to individual members any questions relating to the doctrine, worship, government, or discipline of the Church." Against this proviso exclusively did Dr. Lee dissent, and as to it the Commission was any thing but unanimous. It also formed no part whatever of that dissatisfaction with the Government as to which Dr. Chalmers, by suppressing the facts, would create an impression that Dr. Lee had broken the clerical array of unanimity.

Now, nothing can be more certain than, 1st, That the words of that proviso, which alone formed the subject of dissent, were inserted by Dr. Cook, the framer of the motion, because,—not Dr. Lee, but *Dr. Chalmers himself* had been supposed to have maintained an opposite opinion in the Commission, and one which the very week before had been unanimously approved of by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, when propounded by Dr. Lee. Against this opinion, in which *Dr. Chalmers* and the Presbytery of Edinburgh *concurred with Dr. Lee*, it was that Dr. Cook wished to guard, but most certainly it was not *peculiar*. 2d, The member who concurred in the dissent from this part of Dr. Cook's motion, was not, as Dr. Chalmers states it, an elder, but the Rev. Dr. Burns of Paisley, whose zeal in the cause of Church Extension has never been doubted; and, 3d, Dr. Lee's dissent from this part of the motion, which I shall quote immediately, expresses as unhesitating and unqualified a desire for Church Extension, as Dr. Chalmers himself ever did on any occasion whatever.

But this matter requires more particular explanation; and to take it in the order of time, it will be observed, that the Royal Commission having reached Edinburgh soon after it was issued in July 1835, immediately became the subject of much observation. The matter came before the Presbytery of Edinburgh on the last Wednesday of September 1835; and it having been objected elsewhere that the civil magistrate had no right to enquire into the doctrines taught by the Church, or the manner in which its ministers discharged their duties, Dr. Lee, besides, denying that the Commission directed any such enquiry to be made, maintained that the civil power had such right according to the declaration in the 23d Chapter of the Confession of Faith, "that he (the civil magistrate) hath authority, and it is his duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the effecting whereof, he hath power to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."

All the other members of Presbytery who expressed any opinion at that meeting, adopted the same view of the matter; and thus no opposite opinion having been expressed by any member, it was agreed not to put

it into the shape of a resolution, "to avoid the appearance of influencing those of their number who might attend the Assembly Commission next week," (Cal. Merc. 26th September, 1835.) I do not know whether Dr. Chalmers was present on this occasion, as he did not speak; but so it is, therefore, that the Presbytery of Edinburgh appears to have concurred unanimously in opinion with Dr. Lee on this matter, the peculiar ground of which Dr. Chalmers says it is *unnecessary to mention*, and in which he now represents Dr. Lee as having "*struck out*" from all his brethren in the ministry. Will Dr. Chalmers now say *that Dr. Lee stood alone in his unlooked for and particular evolution?*

But this is not all. Whether Dr. Chalmers was present in the Presbytery of Edinburgh on this occasion or not, he was present and he made a speech of two hours duration to the Commission of Assembly the week after. That speech he afterwards published in a very abridged form, for the reading of it does not occupy a fourth part of that time. But the material point is, that Dr. Cook rose immediately after Dr Chalmers, and moved the resolution already referred to, which was adopted by every member of the Commission, *including Dr. Lee*, with the single exception of one gentleman, an elder, who placed his objection on other grounds. In the course of his speech Dr. Cook used expressions, to which I request the particular attention of my readers. These were :— "The next point he would allude to was that of pastoral superintendance. In this respect a very different interpretation had been put upon the Commission *by his learned friend Dr. Chalmers* than he held," (Presb. Review, No. XXVII. p. 41.) Dr. Cook also said, a similar view had been maintained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh the week before. And for these reasons he concluded his motion with the words, against which Dr. Lee dissented. It appears, therefore, second, that Dr. Chalmers, at the time Dr. Lee performed his *particular and unexpected evolution*, was believed at least to concur with him and the unanimous Presbytery of Edinburgh in the opinions and views from which that evolution proceeded. Again, therefore, I ask, does Dr. Chalmers still say *that Dr. Lee stood alone in his unlooked for and particular evolution* ?

Still, however, this is not all. It appears from the report of the debate already referred to, that Dr. Lee, who is alleged to have stood quite alone, was supported at the moment in his objection to Dr. Cook's explanatory expressions, by no less zealous an extensionist than Dr. Burns of Paisley. And it appears from the Appendix to the Acts of Assembly 1836, that the following entry was in terms of the opinion of Dr. Burns and *the Presbytery of Edinburgh*, and was no "private or peculiar evolution" on the part of Dr. Lee. "Dr. Lee entered his dissent against the retention of the words—'It being clearly understood that the Commission of the Assembly hold that it is not competent to the Commissioners to put to individual members any questions relating to the doctrine, worship, government, or discipline of the Church,' *To which dissent Dr. Burns adhered.*" And from a passage in the Presbyterian Review at the time, it is to be presumed that more of the members of Commission would have joined in the dissent, had they not understood the words in a different sense. For the Editor observes in a note, that "if this concluding sentence of the motion amounted to a declaration on abstract principle, that it was incompetent for the civil power to make the inquiries referred to, *we should have concurred in the propriety of Dr. Lee's dissent;* but considering it merely as a declaration of the under-

astnding of the Church, that the Commission, as explained by Lord John Russell's letter, did not, in point of fact, authorise any such inquiries to be made, we can see no sufficient objection to it."

Still, however, for the last time, this is not the whole. Dr. Lee's reasons of dissent are on record, and I now submit them to my readers, for the purpose of showing what they were; and particularly of showing, that on the very occasion on which he is accused by Dr. Chalmers of having "*struck out from all his brethren*," he was asserting the cause of Church Extension in terms just as unqualified as ever Dr. Chalmers did or could do. The whole reasons are worthy of perusal; but I call particular attention to the concluding sentence, and I say most confidently, that Dr. Lee's conduct on the occasion in question *was not the cause* of Dr. Chalmers's change of opinion with regard to him; and that it ought, on the contrary, to have been the cause of changing any adverse opinion which might previously have been entertained. The following are those reasons which Dr. Chalmers ought to have well considered before he ventured to conduct himself towards Dr. Lee as he has done—

> "Reasons of Dissent against the insertion of the following words in the Resolution of the Commission of the General Assembly, 30th September 1835:—It being clearly understood that the Commission of the Assembly hold that it is not competent to the Commissioners to put to individual members any questions relating to the Doctrine, Worship, Government, or Discipline of the Church."

"1*st*, There is no reason to conclude that it has been in the contemplation of his Majesty's Government to put any questions on these matters which it would be improper for individual members to answer; and it does not appear to be very becoming to insinuate that there has been an intention which is not expressed in the Commission or Instructions.

"2*d*, It is possible to conceive that various questions might be put on these subjects, on which misapprehensions may be entertained, which it would be for the credit and interest of the Church to remove.

"3*d*, It is well known that questions on that subject have been answered without reserve by individual Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland, when examined by Committees of the House of Commons, and that the answers have not always been very complimentary to the general character of the Church; and yet it is not known that either the General Assembly, or any other Church Court, has censured those members for answering such questions.

"4*th*, It is the duty of every Minister of the Church to embrace every favourable opportunity of imparting correct information with regard to the principles and practices of the Church, and it would be difficult to assign any satisfactory reason for withholding from the King or his Commissioners, what a minister should be willing to communicate to every one whom he can benefit by his instructions.

"These reasons refer entirely to questions of a general nature, and not to such as may have a tendency to implicate other members of the Church; but I cannot perceive any impropriety in an individual minister stating what he conceives to be the peculiar advantage of the form of worship and government, as well as the excellencies of the system of doctrine and discipline established and ratified by law; and giving an account of the manner in which his time is occupied in professional study, —in the public offices of religion,—in private communications with his people,—in attendance on Church Courts, and other essential duties of

his vocation, *so as to show how great a call there is for providing an additional number of labourers for the instruction, edification, and comfort of a rapidly increasing population, many of whom are sunk in ignorance, and addicted to every form of immorality.*"

I hope Dr. Chalmers has attended to the whole of the foregoing reasons of dissent; and I ask how he can venture to say that this pretended evolution on the part of Dr. Lee was the cause of any change of opinion, on his own part, with regard to his fitness for the office of Moderator? I particularly point to the concluding paragraph, which I have printed in *italics*, and enquire, how he presumes to deny, in so far as that evolution was concerned, that a gentleman, who expressed such sentiments, is "most cordially interested in the promotion of the great Scheme of Church Extension, in which the Church is at present engaged?" And I ask if he will still pretend to tell the Church that he has not calumniated the character of Dr. Lee in the circulars which he sent round to the Presbyteries recommending Dr. Gardner for the office of Moderator?

Whatever, therefore, may have been the true cause of Dr. Chalmers's change of opinion with regard to Dr. Lee, and whether this be the first occasion of his having stated the pretence of its having been the conduct of the latter in the Commission of September 1835; whatever may have been his own change of opinion on the merits of the question itself, I presume it is now certain that his memory has proved treacherous with regard to it, and that this, which is the reason assigned in the "Conference," *could* not have been the real cause of any such change. At least, I am sure I shall no longer be blamed for not changing my opinion at the same time, *or for the same reasons* as my Reverend "antagonist."

The result, however, was, that Dr. M'Leod was unanimously elected Moderator in 1836. At the same time Dr. Welsh made a public intimation that Dr. Lee would be brought forward in 1837. That he did this as "a single speech adventurer," or with any view to assume to himself, or to any "knot of political lawyers," or to any other "skillful intriguers or successful agitators of the Church," or in order to disturb or usurp the right of initiation with regard to Moderators, are charges far too trifling to be noticed. Any effect they might have been expected to produce will be more than compensated by the fact, that the supporters of Dr. Lee consist of clergymen as well as laymen, and are irreconcileably divided amongst themselves as to most public questions, though they are united in their desire to see justice done to his merits and his feelings.

It is known, that according to a compact of their own among the past Moderators, Dr. M'Gill, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. P. M'Farlan, and Dr. Thomson were to have the nomination of the candidate for the year 1837. And the other old Moderators were bound to acquiesce in the choice, on whomsoever it might happen to fall. It is also known, that in May 1836, a meeting was held by them, where Dr. M'Gill and Dr. Thomson were present, and Dr. Chalmers and Dr. M'Farlan were not. On that occasion Drs. M'Gill and Thomson warmly recommended Dr. Lee to the notice of their brethren. No formal resolution may have been entered into;—but what I have stated cannot be denied. The thing got abroad; and the friends of Dr. Lee believed for a considerable time that he was to be the nominee of the old Moderators for 1837.

I do not mention it as matter of blame; but, in point of fact, the same system of *secrecy* was practised in 1836 as had taken place in 1835.

And it was not till towards the end of August that I learned, in consequence of communications from the country, not made to myself, (so little was I suspected of being a partizan,) that another meeting of Old Moderators had been held, at the instigation of Drs. Chalmers and M'Farlan, from which Dr. Thomson was absent, and at which Dr. M'Gill was not summoned to attend; a fact, by the way, which has been already publicly stated, and of which Dr. Chalmers has not thought proper to take any notice, although it materially affects the weight to be attached to the proceedings at that second meeting. But so it was, that at that meeting it was resolved by the two who were there, to propose Dr. Gardner; and, as before, the whole remaining members are said to have held themselves bound by the compact, to acquiesce in the suggestion.

This resolution would appear to have been reduced into proper form, for it has been acted upon. But it was not exclusively in the usual manner, that it was communicated to the Church. On the contrary, it was sent to confidential members of different Presbyteries, with a statement, which Dr. Chalmers *may say* does not mention or allude to Dr. Lee, but which undoubtedly must have been considered to have done so, seeing that it bears direct reference to his opinion on the University Commission—which however, Dr. Chalmers *has suppressed* in the account he has given of his letter. At any rate, it must have had the same effect as if Dr. Lee had been named and negatived, after the publicity which had been given to the *intention* of suggesting him by the previous proceedings.

It was after some of these letters, or copies of them, had been sent back from the country, that I was again applied to by the same gentleman who had spoken to me the year before; and who, for the information of Dr. Chalmers, I may mention, is an old Tory in politics, and a supporter of his own in Church matters. I was more than ever *impressed* with what appeared to me to be the injustice which was about to be done to Dr. Lee. Above all, I was *much impressed* by the disregard which appeared to be shewn to his feelings; and the disregard which was evinced for his character.

I was also surprised to learn, that a mode of giving weight to the machinery put in operation against Dr Lee, equally unauthorised and unwarrantable, had been adopted, in as far as the circulars of 1835, if not of 1836, were sent along with communications signed officially by Dr. Chalmers as the Chairman of the Church Extension Committee. Altogether, I could neither reconcile the measure itself, nor the manner of carrying it into effect with any of my preconceived notions of propriety. I did therefore again agree to espouse the cause of Dr. Lee. But, as before, I was much restrained by the peculiarity of my own position, and on this occasion, the letters I wrote were limited to the number of five. I also attended three meetings on the subject,—one of them since Dr. Chalmers published his letter to the Edinburgh Advertiser; and I shall have concluded the history of my connexion with the proceedings in favour of Dr. Lee, when I have said, that I was not the framer of the Resolutions of 2d December,—that I was not a member of the Committee which revised them,—that I did not hear them, as finally drawn, up read over till I went to the meeting of the 2d December,—and that I left the room immediately after they had been read, and without waiting to hear any discussion upon them. But I did then, and do still most cordially concur, not merely in the sentiment on which Dr. Chalmers has dwelt with such

endless iteration, but in every other sentiment which the resolutions express.

I have thus distinctly stated the part I have taken in these transactions; and I hope I have made it manifest that every supposition and every insinuation which Dr. Chalmers has been pleased to promulgate with regard to me is visionary and unfounded. But let not Dr. Chalmers expect to escape from the charge of calumniating my character, by simply asserting that he had been *mistaken* with regard to me. I demand of him, Why, when all this was *possible*, he should, as a Christian and a teacher of Christianity, have singled me out as the object of his virulent attacks, without having some reason, at least some pretence, for believing that the reverse of all this was the case? Why should it have been supposed or asserted by any man, and most of all by a person in his situation, that my conduct or my motives had been bad, unless it was known that they were so? Or unless there were apparent grounds for believing that such was the case? I will answer this question for my Reverend antagonist, and I am sorry for the import of the answer which irresistibly forces itself upon my mind. But in truth it has already been made manifest by the foregoing statement. It was thought that the Church of Scotland was opposed to the present Government, and that to connect Dr. Lee with the Government would have a powerful influence in defeating his claims to the Chair. Dr. Lee's own political opinions were too well known to render this assertion even feasible, without some apparent evidence; and the expedient occurred of connecting him with a Whig Procurator. This, however, was still not enough. If the Procurator conducted himself like a gentleman and a man of honour, Dr. Lee was not to be rejected merely because he had the misfortune, it might be unconsciously or even unwillingly, of having his support. The cause was too good, the end too important, to render it of the least consequence to Dr. Chalmers whether the Procurator was in reality innocent or guilty. He knew nothing of him, but that he was believed to be a Whig, certainly never a place-holder. He had no knowledge of his having had communications with the Government, or of his conduct in the Commission. But the Doctor did not hesitate to make the broadest assertions on these, as well as on many other points. And if he had been wrong in either of these particulars, then a great point in the way of *management* was gained to the cause of Dr. Chalmers. Guilty, therefore, it was necessary that the Procurator should be; and no matter though it was to be accomplished by the utter destruction of his character. Guilty, accordingly, Dr. Chalmers was determined to find him. For this purpose, however, the Reverend Doctor could not, it seems, find a single ingredient in the world of fact,—and his "imaginativeness,"—I only say his "imaginativeness,"—was set to work to supply the deficiency, and the pamphlet now before the public is the proof and the fruit of his exertions.

Is any thing more necessary for my defence against these imputations of having been unduly or dishonestly connected with bringing forward Dr. Lee? Must I answer all the other charges made against me in this reckless pursuit of a favourite scheme? To those who know me I am sure it is unnecessary, but I have been publicly accused, and I am entitled to make my defence.

I am accused, in the next place then, of having unduly assisted in getting up evidence on the part of Dr. Lee for the purpose of "*oversetting*" that of Dr. Chalmers. It is therefore necessary to mention certain facts, which, with most minds, will very deeply affect the whole of the remaining criminatory passages in the Conference. These are,—

(1.) That I was not present at the *first* examination of Dr. Lee. That his evidence was taken in shorthand; and that I had not seen it, and if I had, would not have been able to read it, when I examined Dr. Chalmers on the 20th of February, 1836.

(2.) That I left Edinburgh for London on the 15th of March, being three days before Dr. Lee's *second* examination, and did not return to Scotland till the end of April, when the Commission was sitting in Glasgow, to which place I immediately proceeded. And,

(3.) That Dr. Lee's evidence was not written out and printed off till the month of May at soonest, and was not perused by me, till some time between July and November. I think it could not have been before the beginning of September that I read it, from the manner in which my time was occupied. But I have not enquired particularly about it; for the material fact is, that I neither did nor could see or read one word of any of his three depositions earlier than the month of May 1836, being long after the evidence with regard to Edinburgh was finally closed.

It is now quite plain, that I could have had no hand whatever in the actual examination of Dr. Lee; and, therefore, to most minds it may appear that I might safely leave this part of the case. But I am determined to go through with the task I have undertaken. I will defend myself against every imputation which has been cast upon my character. I will sweep away every shred of the "Conference" in which it is traduced. I go on, therefore, to notice certain passages which have more particular reference to my own concern in the matter.

I may observe, in the next place, then, that Dr. Chalmers begins his pamphlet with a long and laboured complaint of the *painfulness* of the task which he says that I and the other friends of Dr. Lee have imposed on him: and in a later part of the pamphlet he sneers, with great complacency at some boast he seems to think I have made as to the *delicacy* of my situation. Of the first I cannot judge any farther than from perceiving, that, in order to get at Dr. Lee, Dr. Chalmers has shewn no mercy either to the feelings or the character of any one who has happened unfortunately to stand in his way. And with regard to the latter, I can only say, that I never boasted of my delicacy at all. I make no boast of any thing but a regard to truth. And if I have abstained from attending the meetings of the Church Extension Committee, of which I am a member, it was not from any *delicacy*, real or pretended, but from the *difficulty* that I felt I would be placed in, if, while acting under the obligation, well known to Dr. Chalmers, of preserving secrecy till the Commission had reported, I had been exposed to the necessity of being silent amidst all the wild and groundless aspersions which it was at one time the custom to shower down on the Commission and the Commissioners; and the misconceptions and misconstructions which, beyond all doubt, would have arisen from such silence.

The Reverend Doctor commences his more particular address to myself

by reminding me (page 10) of his own evidence delivered *in my hearing* on the 20th of February 1836; and he particularly refers to that portion of it in which he mentions the small number of new families, viz. 8 out of 325, who came to the district he was speaking of at the last half-yearly term of flitting. From this he draws the conclusion that the fluctuation of the people from one town parish to another had been much over-rated, and that were a parish minister to reside amongst them he would not be so exposed to large and incessant changes of parishioners, by the removal of the old, and the succession of new families, as many apprehended.

I have no interest to say any thing against *this* statement; and as Dr. Chalmers, who made it before us, is the person who mentions it now, I can have no objection to admit that it is true that he said so. The material point, however, to which I in return request particular attention, is, that Dr. Chalmers himself states,—and in this respect also his assertion is correct,—that he gave this information to the Commissioners *on the 20th day of February:* And that he does not, as in truth he could not, say that he had made the most distant allusion to the subject, at any time or on any occasion prior to that day. He had been examined at much length on the 13th of the same month, and was pleased to compliment me both publicly and privately for the accuracy and the completeness of the examination. He did not then advert to this subject at all; and no question was put with regard to it, either by myself, or by any of the other Commissioners. And when he was asked if he had any thing more to suggest, he said most distinctly that he believed he had not.

Dr. Chalmers next says (p. 10.), "You will further recollect that, a few evenings thereafter, you did me the honour of a call, when you informed me that Dr. Lee, who, it seems, was present at the delivery of this evidence, had come up to you, and stated that I was altogether wrong; and that the fluctuations of the families were both so rapid and extensive, that little or no good could be done by a minister in the way that I specified."

Before proceeding any farther with this paragraph of the Conference, I have to advert to the commencement of it, where Dr. Chalmers says, "that a few evenings *after* his examination, I did him the honour of a call, when I informed him," &c. If my sole object, in writing these observations were to "overset" Dr. Chalmers, I could have no motive for denying this averment, for the truth is, that I did call twice on Dr. Chalmers, and each time, in consequence of his having offered to call upon me, but intimating, on both occasions, that he was in a bad state of health, which induced me rather to go to him, that I might spare him all the trouble I could. I say, that I might have allowed this statement to have passed without any other notice, than by observing that Dr. Chalmers had committed a very gross breach of the confidence due by one gentleman to another, when he ventured to publish to the world, that I had given him private information "that Dr. Lee had come up to me, and stated that he was altogether wrong, and that the fluctuations of the families were both rapid and extensive." And if I had made such a remark, I am sure that every honourable mind would have responded to the accusation.

But, *second*, While I should be extremely unwilling, in the general case, to pledge my memory, in so trifling a matter, against that of any other man; yet having already given one instance of the treachery of the Rev. Doctor's recollection, as to the private and peculiar evolution, I would even, though I had no particular reason to assign for it, venture

to deny that a few evenings "thereafter I did him the honour of a call," and communicated to him what he says I did with regard to Dr. Lee. My reason for this is, that I am sure I only called on Dr. Chalmers twice, and that both of these visits preceded, not merely his second examination on the 20th, but his first on the 13th of February.

There is then a most groundless attempt to throw the charge of treachery from his own shoulders upon mine. In the next paragraph (p. 11.), he says, "You did not inform me that Dr. Lee was to be called upon for a counter evidence on this subject."—"I know not whether it was you that asked, or he that offered to overset the testimony I had given; but I learned afterwards that his examination was to take place; and that, meanwhile, he was making diligent preparations for it."

I hope Dr. Chalmers will not venture to deny that he has here directly charged me with the basest treachery. He says that I called on him to tell him of Dr. Lee's difference of opinion from him, as if I had been friendly to him; while all the time he pretends to be ignorant whether it was not I who had asked Dr. Lee to come forward and *overset* his testimony. I might be entitled, as the party accused, to call for the proof of so injurious an aspersion. But I waive this advantage, and shall proceed to explain the reason why I asked particular attention to the date of 20th February a short while ago, and to the assertion that *Dr. Lee* had come forward to contradict the evidence of *Dr. Chalmers*; an assertion, I must now say, which I read with a feeling, for which astonishment is too weak an expression. That reason, as yet known only to Dr. Chalmers and myself, is short, unanswerable, overwhelming; and since the Reverend Doctor wishes for "open and fearless warfare," I would betray my duty to myself, and evince the most lamentable cowardice if I refused to meet him.

Dr. Chalmers says that he learned "afterwards," *i. e.* after he had been himself examined, that Dr. Lee's examination "was to take place, and that meanwhile he was making diligent preparation for it," (p. 11.) And again (p. 12), That Dr. Lee laboured hard, "not less hard than the most reckless of the voluntaries who went forth on the same errand with himself," "to impugn the accuracy both of our statistics and our views." These passages are very artfully, very unfairly, and very ungenerously framed. The renewed enquiries of Dr. Lee bear reference to a later period of the examinations, and I have the *best reason to know* that they were entered upon for the very purpose of refuting the statistics of the voluntaries, who had represented the population of Dr. Lee's parish as considerably lower in number than he had done himself. How he came to ADD any thing to what he had said about parish removals *before* the examination of Dr. Chalmers, will appear afterwards. For the present, I beg it may be observed, that I distinctly say it will appear when that evidence shall come before the eye of the public, that it was not Dr. Lee who came or who was brought forward to overset the evidence of Dr. Chalmers, but that *it was Dr. Chalmers who endeavoured to overset the evidence of Dr. Lee.* The proofs of this assertion, which Dr. Chalmers *should* know already, are to be found in the irrefragable testimony of dates. For,

(1.) Dr. Chalmers, at his first examination, which took place on the 13th of February, did not utter one syllable on the subject now in question. And he does not say that he did.

(2.) *Dr. Lee was next examined;* viz. on the 18th of February; and

having alluded to the subject rather obscurely in the answer to one of the printed queries, did, in answer to a question from one of the Commissioners, make a more pointed statement with regard to it. But as Dr. Chalmers had said nothing on the subject, it could not possibly be in answer to him.

(3.) On the 20th, Dr. Chalmers was examined a second time, and questions were then put to him on the subject by myself. But not till after he had himself made to us a long statement upon the subject, which as he had not even thought the matter worthy of notice at his first examination, *could have been intended for nothing else than to contradict the evidence of Dr. Lee.* The fact, therefore, is certain, that *it was not Dr. Lee who contradicted Dr. Chalmers, but Dr. Chalmers who contradicted Dr. Lee.*

Doubtless the true question for the public should be, which of them was best informed. But Dr. Chalmers has chosen to put the matter upon the order of time, and it is important to have it accurately stated; and this having been done, I think it must now be obvious how much of the vituperation of the Conference is swept away at once by the simple establishment of the fact, that it was not Dr. Lee who came forward to contradict Dr. Chalmers.

And let not my reverend "*antagonist*" pretend to escape from the contest, by reminding me, that Dr. Lee was *again examined* on the 18th and 19th of March; for he has made all his extracts but one from the evidence of the 18th of February. That one related to an entirely different matter; and if Dr. Lee, thinking that his character for *accuracy*, (for surely he did not *then* think of his *veracity* having been doubted), was affected by this contradiction, afterwards requested to be re-examined; and if he made "diligent preparation for it;" my conclusion—and, I say, *the fair conclusion*, would have been that he did so in self defence. He was unquestionably well entitled so to defend himself. At all events, I having been absent at all these diets of examination, had no hand in the matter.

After this, need I return to the remainder of the Reverend Doctor's sentence on the subject of the information he supposes me to have given him regarding the intended evidence of Dr. Lee? He says—"This intelligence more than annoyed; it grieved, and was exceedingly painful to me; and I expressed myself in a tone and feeling of earnestness, with which I am sure you could not sympathize—bidding you beware of Dr. Lee's authority on this subject, who, however versant in the lore of Church antiquities and Church Law, was not to be trusted, either for his observation or for his judgment, in those practical matters which entered into any question of Church economics. The truth is, that I had heard, a hundred times over, the same exaggerated estimate of town fluctuations; and it does no harm to those who have thoroughly studied all the influences and bearings of our Church Extension Scheme—it being with them not an argument against, but an *argumentum a fortiori* in its favour." I know that Dr. Chalmers proceeds immediately to say (p. 11.) "The effect, however, is very different on those who have but slightly attended to this matter," and so on. But does the Rev. Doctor really mean to say, 1*st*, That if he had heard the same statement *a hundred times over from other quarters*, Dr. Lee must be considered as having been guilty of inventing it himself; more particularly as it is supported by the City Improvement Books, which being taken up for the purpose of levying a

tax, may err on the side of understatement, but not by any possibility on that of exaggeration, or, 2*d*, That his having stated that which Dr. Chalmers says *is in reality favourable* to the cause of Church Extension, can be looked on as affording any proof whatever of his having done so with a view to damage or overset that cause; or, 3*d*, That if the thing were true, or if he believed it to be true, it was his duty to have suppressed or misrepresented the fact, because it was possible that some ignorant persons might have been unable to see its bearing? Is this really the way in which Dr. Chalmers thinks an honest or conscientious witness should deliver his testimony?

We shall now suppose that all this is settled; and I really feel that I am not assuming too much when I say so. There is still another intrenchment to be forced, for Dr. Chalmers is too skillful a general to have left nothing for him to fall back upon. I now take for granted, that it is proved that I did not get up Dr. Lee's testimony. I did not take his evidence. I did not read it till August or September. It was not proposed to make him Moderator to give weight to his testimony, or to reward him for it. He had been proposed eight or ten months *before it was delivered*. All this is very true. It is all undeniably proved. But at last I did read the evidence. And why did I not change my opinion then? Why did I not penetrate through Dr. Lee's private and peculiar, but most flimsy and most wicked evolutions? I will say more than Dr. Chalmers will like to hear on the subject of the evidence immediately. But just now I have to do with the following passage of the Conference:—"Before taking leave of Mr. Bell, I have one question more to address to him. *Did you tell* all your coadjutors in this Opposition, to us the Old Moderators—did you tell them the nature and tendency of Dr. Lee's evidence? Did you tell Dr. Gordon of it, or Dr. Dickson, or Mr. Candlish; or did you speak of it to Mr. Whigham and Mr. Walter Cook? We have heard oftener than once of the delicacy which your situation as Commissioner imposes on you. Was it this delicacy which restrained you from informing these men? Then why did not the same delicacy restrain you from misleading these men?—or why did not the delicacy forbid you from meddling with this business at all? Sir, if these men went along with you under the impulse of Dr. Lee's general claims to be Moderator some time, and you did not tell them that which was known to yourself, and which would have opened their eyes to the special danger of his being Moderator this time—then, though you have not misled them aggressively, they have been misled by the ignorance in which they were left by you."

I pass without remark the singular and laborious insolence of the passage I have now quoted. It is not for me at present to determine the tone which Dr. Chalmers is entitled to assume in addressing any one moving in the rank of a gentleman, even when he differs from him. I say nothing of the poor flattery addressed to two distinguished members of society, with whom, as Churchmen, I believe Dr. Chalmers has never been accustomed to agree. I have already noticed the sneer so ill deserved on the subject of *delicacy*, and I have now simply to answer the question which Dr. Chalmers has here put to me.

I say, then, in one word, that *I could not tell* "all my coadjutors particular facts detailed in Dr. Lee's evidence," because it would have been a breach of duty; and Dr. Chalmers is well aware that it would. But I say, in the second place, and I say it boldly, decidedly, and unequivo-

cally, that if I had told them of it, *I would not have told them* that it was of "the nature and tendency" which has been alleged by Dr. Chalmers, but of a nature and tendency precisely the reverse. I will be more particular immediately on the most undue and inexcusable use which Dr. Chalmers has made of the evidence. I now tell my Reverend antagonist, that I had as much right to meddle with this business as he had. That I am sure my meddling was more open, more honest and more straightforward than his own. I tell him, in the next place, that I did not *mislead* any of the gentlemen whom he has named, either aggressively or otherwise. And lastly, I tell him, for it is most material that the question should be answered, that I had ample means of knowing the opinions of Dr. Lee, without resorting to his evidence, and of stating those opinions, had it been necessary, without misleading any one of my associates.

I tell him, therefore, that my knowledge of the sentiments of Dr. Lee was derived from sources open to all my "coadjutors." It was derived from many and repeated conversations with himself when the business of the Commission was not in either of our heads. From the opinion which I knew was entertained of him, in that respect, by the high-minded and honourable men with whom I am connected, in the literally small share I took in recommending him to the notice of the Church. From the statement of Dr. Lee himself to a deputation of the resolutionists who waited upon him, owing to no doubt of what his sentiments were, but to a desire to have his own authority before committing themselves. From the knowledge of the fact that Dr. Lee preached in a missionary station himself, besides discharging the usual duty of his parish, while he had a colleague. From a strong recollection of the part which he took, both in the Presbytery and in the Commission in 1835, a recollection confirmed by the express statement in his dissent, that it was necessary "to show *how great a call there is* for providing an additional number of labourers for the instruction, edification, and comfort of a rapidly increasing population, many of whom are sunk in ignorance, and addicted to every form of immorality." And, in short, from a conviction the most absolute, arising not merely from all these circumstances, but which was confirmed by the tenor of his evidence when I did see it, which was before the 2d of December, "that he is most cordially interested in the promotion of the great Scheme of Church Extension in which the Church is at present engaged." (I do not mean to say he used these words.) And from his having himself very lately read to me a statement in a manuscript, in his own possession, that any differences he may have with Dr. Chalmers are not with respect to the scheme itself, but *because he is not able altogether to agree with those whose general views he is disposed to prefer, and is unwilling to come into public collision with such as have a most laudable object in view, while, at the same time, they may have adopted views different from his in regard to the best method of obtaining that object.* I pointedly and particularly call the attention of Dr. Chalmers to the words in italics. They have been so printed for his use, and he, at least, will clearly understand what I mean.

I have thus explained all that I know, all that I told, and all that I was at liberty to tell with regard to Dr. Lee. But as to either informing or misleading "my coadjutors," not one of them required, or stood in need of any information from me. I am proud to say, that all the vitu-

peration and all the anathemas of my reverend antagonist, joined with all the explanations and all the arguments which he has been able to offer, have not in any respect changed the opinions of any one of them. I point to their names, and ask with no ordinary confidence, if this does not amount to proof positive of the groundlessness of his charges. I think it no boast when I say, that I am confident of having carried along with me the feelings of every honourable and upright mind; and already I flatter myself that my answer to the Reverend Doctor is complete.

My task, however, is not yet done;—for although I have thus removed all the bad parts of the case,—although I am no longer the ring-leader who drew so many kind and amiable and simple-hearted clergymen, so many astute and clear-sighted Conservative lawyers and others into my snares, I have still, in so far as I can, to defend myself from what must now be called the folly, of not having seen through the iniquities of Dr. Lee, and the faults of his evidence.

Before entering upon this, however, perhaps I may be permitted to record one other instance of the *uncertainty* of my Reverend antagonist's memory, which bears upon the question of the Royal Commissioners having wished to interpose indefinite delays in the way of the pending investigations; and is still more illustrative of the desperate recklessness with which he issues his anathemas; and the effect which the brilliancy of his imagination has in obscuring the brightness of his recollection.

I have already shewn that the Government took *less than two months* to make up their minds on the subject of Church Extension, and to carry their resolution into effect. I have now to notice a charge which Dr. Chalmers has put upon record against the Commissioners, for not having given in their first report, before the meeting of the last Session of Parliament. I refer to the circumstance of the Doctor having caused the Church Extension Committee to report to last General Assembly that he had devised a plan which would have enabled the Commission to report, as he states it in one page, (Report to Assembly, 1836, p. 22,) "in *a month or two* after the commencement of their operations;" and on the next (p. 23,) "as they think, *in a few days.*" I inquire not whether he thought the Commissioners were to examine *no other person than himself*. But he states in the next place that he laid this plan, 1st, before Lord Melbourne; 2d, before Lord Minto as head of the Commission; 3d, before two individual members of the Commission; and 4th, "before that honourable body." And then he makes his Committee say, "We state these things because it seems necessary you should know that no pains have been spared by your Deputation or your Committee to expedite the settlement of this question. The reason why these repeated suggestions have failed, *and no notice is known to have been taken of them*, either by the Commission or the Government, *your Committee do not profess to understand*, and they forbear to offer any explanation of it."

Such is the charge which a Committee of the General Assembly, confiding in the fairness and accuracy, of their Chairman, were induced to lay deliberately on the table of the last General Assembly. It was printed by authority, and has been circulated over the whole breadth of the Church and of the kingdom. Now I have mentioned that I had two conversations with Dr. Chalmers before he was examined. They were both of considerable length; and I now remind him that more than half an hour of one

of them was employed on my part in communicating that very information which he told the Assembly had not been afforded with respect to his application ; and in endeavouring to convince him that we *could not* report upon the state of Water of Leith or St. Leonards till we were ready at the same time to report on the facts which he had himself admitted in some of his controversial writings, that there were twenty churches within two miles of these places ; and that in these churches there were many thousands of untaken, and a large number of unoccupied sittings. I am not here stating any opinion. I only mention facts which I hoped Dr. Chalmers would have seen must have frustrated the object he himself had in view. He was not convinced. But surely he had no right to say that we had never told him *why* we had not adopted his plan, or that we had refused or neglected to take any notice of it. Dr. Chalmers may not feel himself called on to *admit* what I have now stated. I am confident he will not think of *denying* it.

In proceeding to advert to the excerpts which Dr. Chalmers has *professed to give* from the evidence of Dr. Lee, it is of some importance to observe, that the complaint on the part of Dr. Chalmers with which I have been hitherto dealing, was, that Dr. Lee had come forward to contradict what he said on the subject of Parochial *fluctuations*, and I think it is now quite clear that it was he who came forward to contradict Dr. Lee. In the questions he has thought proper to address to me other topics are embraced. But nearly the whole,—I think all but one—of the quotations from the evidence are given from the deposition of 18th February, delivered two days before Dr. Chalmers' own, which it is said to have been *obtained* (meaning, I presume, *got up*) to overset. I deeply regret the difficulties in the way of giving this part of the case that decisive refutation which the mere sight of the evidence itself will, when it comes, most assuredly afford. For myself, after having cleared my character from the stigmas endeavoured to be cast upon it, I could have afforded to wait till that evidence comes out in an official form ;—or rather, I may say, I should have been very indifferent about making any answer to the conference at all. But to have stopped where I am might have been misinterpreted,—I have no doubt it would have been misrepresented ; and it would have been said that I had " faintly" given up Dr. Lee and his cause. The injury to him would not have been of my inflicting. I never have been so active in the matter as I could have wished, had I been placed in other circumstances. But it is in my power to be of some service, which might be too late were I to wait till the return of the evidence from London would permit me to enter into full detail. I shall, therefore, endeavour to make such remarks as the restriction on myself may permit. And that there may be no mistake as to my meaning, I repeat again that the same rule which prevents the Commission from giving out the evidence to third parties, before they receive his Majesty's commands, prevents me from making use of that very evidence which is now under my eye, while I am framing these paragraphs.

And now I come to the most painful part of the task which has been forced upon me ; and I do it under the full conviction that a very few weeks will show the truth of what I am about to say. I am nearly certain that Dr. Chalmers has seen the evidence. He himself proclaims his responsibility for what he has quoted—of which more immediately. And

painful as the duty is, I feel it to be my duty, distinctly and unequivocally to charge him with having given an account of the evidence directly at variance with the truth. I dwell not on this most distressing topic. I am willing to await the arrival of the test. In the mean time, I call attention to the different heads of the colloquy with myself.

1. I pass the sentence (p. 12) in which Dr. Chalmers speaks of "his (Dr. Lee's) monstrous exaggerations on the amount of parish removals," and his own most eager and unnecessary insinuation of "the welcome wherewith such evidence would be received and acted on at the head-quarters of the Government I serve,"—with the observation, that Dr. Chalmers himself has informed us that those exaggerations are founded on rather an accurate kind of document,—a tax-book of the district, which certainly could not have been framed for the mere object of supporting Dr. Lee; and could not purposely have contained any allegations of removals *which had not taken place;* however much it may have erred on the side of under statement. And I will add, that if one of the Doctor's best statists can discover so much as he says, that is, survey a seventh part of the parish in a single day, he should have made him do so before the examinations were closed, and not have brought it forward now when the Commission cannot make use of it. If there has been any omission here, the blame lies with Dr. Chalmers. I am sure the Commissioners would have willingly afforded him every facility in their power.

2. I pass also the remarks (p. 12,) on the peculiarities which are said to characterise Dr. Lee's mode of giving evidence. It may or may not evince a degree of sensitiveness which is afraid of exaggerating any thing. The inferences which are drawn from the circumstance must, by this time, have appeared to rest on the most groundless and ungenerous *assumptions.*

3. Dr. Chalmers then says, as I have suggested already, that he (p. 13,) "is responsible for the substantial correctness of all the instances that we are now to adduce." In another place he says, "I am quite sure as to the import of them (Dr. Lee's answers), and more particularly that I do not overstate their injurious effect," &c. And he has shewn a degree of adroitness which fully entitles me to avail myself of this vaunt, repeated as it is I know not how many times in the course of his pamphlet. He knew well what he was saying when he made the boast. He knew that he had the evidence before him when he made his quotations; and if it shall appear that these quotations are inaccurate, mutilated, and garbled, in a manner that no lawyer would have ventured upon, he must not hereafter expect to escape on the pretence that after all he had it not. I say this, because he seems to have been preparing for some such retreat when he answered the application which was made for the materials from which he made his statement as to the evidence by saying that he had not "collected and reserved" more of it than he has quoted. But this device will not serve him. He himself has completely proved that he had more of it in his possession. He speaks of one "interrogation" as "the next *I shall notice.*" Of another as "the last I shall advert to." A third he says "*he singles out.*" And of a fourth, that the effect of it "is not to be impaired by all the expletives and the qualifying clauses wherewith it is accompanied," none of which, however, does he think proper to quote. It is plain, therefore, whatever Dr. Chalmers may have "*collected and reserved,*" that his copy of the evidence *must have contained* much more

8. Paragraph 5, (p. 15) relates to the subject of education, to which I advert, only because it concludes with the often-reiterated question which Dr. Chalmers has done me the honour of addressing to me; and I shall only say that it is a detached sentence of a long examination, and states nothing but what must be the opinion of every man who is capable of forming one upon the subject. I am sorry for the mind that can construe a praise of schools into a depreciation of churches,—I am sorry for the feeling which can imagine that the one was meant to be set in opposition to the other,—I am sorry for the man who can suppose it a duty to disguise a fact so notorious, as that ignorance is at the bottom of much of our religious darkness,—I am astonished that Dr. Chalmers should have ventured to "*single out*" this from among the various statements of Dr. Lee *which he has suppressed*, as the one from which any man with the smallest pretension to ordinary fairness would consent to take his opinion of Dr. Lee's sentiments, either as to the necessity for additional churches or additional ministers; as to the propriety of allocating a district to each of them, or as to the necessity of a vigilant inspection of the people by their ministers; and, most of all, would I be sorry for the cause of Church Extension if it really stood in need of aid from such small criticisms. Yet this is called "a very remarkable declaration from Dr. Lee."

9. Paragraph 6, (p. 16) commences—"The next interrogation which, in substance, I shall notice is—If a minister had less extra-parochial work to do, would he not accomplish more within the parish? Dr. Lee admits the obviousness of this effect, but he does not think it desirable that it should be so. Both the readers and myself have now ceased to marvel at this, or any other answer from Dr. Lee." It is painful to be obliged to reiterate the same remark. The words quoted do not occupy an entire line of a passage consisting of eleven, with which Dr. Chalmers has not thought proper to grapple. And although I am not at liberty to state what Dr. Lee actually said, I tell Dr. Chalmers that I on my part do "*marvel*" at the "*hardihood*" with which he has ventured to comment on eleven lines of evidence which he has found it *convenient to suppress*.

10. Paragraph 7, (p. 16) states Dr. Lee as having said what to any man of plain understanding would appear to be an undoubted truth, viz.—"That he is rather of opinion, that if a good method of education had been instituted, the people would not have lapsed into their present and prevalent state of ignorance;" and I only advert to it as affording a specimen of the singular straits to which Dr. Chalmers, with all the advantages of selecting, suppressing, and misrepresenting evidence, is reduced, in order to make out the shadow of a case against Dr. Lee.

11. The 8th paragraph, (p. 16) represents Dr. Lee as stating "that the progress of the people's degeneracy is very much owing to a wrong state of the law in regard to the use of spirituous liquors." Dr. Chalmers himself assents to this "with faint praise." He says, "There is truth in this reply." And does he really expect the Church to believe that Dr. Lee's *motive* for mentioning so important a fact could be a bad one? Does he think Dr. Lee could have dreamt that this was the way to get a new tax upon whisky imposed, not along with, but *to the detriment* of a Church endowment? Is this reasoning worthy either of Dr. Chalmers, or the great cause of Church Extension? Could any unknown writer have ventured upon it with the expectation of being read to an end? Or does Dr. Chalmers expect to persuade the Church that it was Dr. Lee's

duty to suppress such a fact, if it was a fact, merely because some perverse enthusiast might think it was diverting attention from other objects of enquiry? Or, that to guard against this, he should have entered into repetitions upon points to which he had already distinctly spoken?

12. Paragraph 9, (p. 17) commences with these words—"I shall conclude these instances, taken from the evidence of Dr. Lee, with one observation more of his, and I leave it with my brethren in the Church to determine the character which it stamps on this whole enterprise. He told you, Sir, after he had made his statements—That he had no favourite theory to support,—meaning, I believe, the theory of the Parochial System, which he had before denounced as chimerical, —and, of course, the theory of Church Extension as being identified therewith,—that he did not agree with his brethren; but that he did not like to come into collision with them, although their views were different from his own. These may not be the words, but they contain the very substance of his declaration, and the effect of which is not to be impaired, Sir, by all the expletives and the qualifying clauses wherewith it is accompanied." And towards the foot of the same page it is said—"But, Sir, my reckoning is not with the evidence of Dr. Lee; my reckoning is with the manifesto of the Resolutionists. Dr. Lee's evidence tells one thing; their manifesto tells another and an opposite thing. That Church, whose servant you are, is hereby misinformed; and misinformed, too, in a way that is directly fitted to mislead them. The evidence of Dr. Lee is a hostile evidence to the cause of Church Extension. But meanwhile the manifesto of the Resolutionists, which asserts his friendship to the cause, blindfolds the ministers and elders—and that too at a time when the printed evidence is secreted from the eyes of the Church, and treasured up for the use of the Government."

Having already disclaimed, with some earnestness, and having, I hope, very satisfactorily disproved the charges against myself, I will not attempt to follow Dr. Chalmers farther through the certainly not very civil declamation of this paragraph. I do not by any means object to the name of Servant of the Church, although it is not a correct one, for my duty is to *advise*, and my unavoidable privilege is, therefore, that of having an independent opinion of my own, which it is my duty to maintain, although I should be left alone in doing so. But, besides, that I am recklessly charged, in the latter of these passages, with having misinformed the Church in a way that is directly fitted to mislead them; besides, I say, that I am thus boldly accused of wilful and deliberate falsehood, I could not, consistently with my duty to a much injured clergyman; I could not, with any regard to my own feelings as a gentleman; I could not, without violating every principle of honour and justice, abstain from declaring, as I now do, in the most solemn and impressive terms I can employ—I do it on my own responsibility, as I value my reputation for truth, for candour, and for sincerity; and I say that the words which Dr. Chalmers has quoted in the above passage, "do not contain the very substance of Dr. Lee's declaration," that they bear no resemblance whatsoever to that substance; that they convey a meaning absolutely and altogether different.

I say, since I am thus driven to it, that it is altogether untrue to say that Dr. Lee's evidence tells one thing, and that the manifesto of the Resolutionists tells another and an opposite thing. That it is untrue to say that the Church is misinformed, and misinformed in a way that is di-

rectly fitted to mislead them. And that it is utterly untrue to say that the evidence of Dr. Lee is a hostile evidence to the cause of Church Extension. My readers are not to understand that I am telling them what Dr. Lee really said. And they are not to suppose I mean to convey the insinuation that he expressed his concurrence, in *all* Dr. Chalmers' views or his plans. But I repeat, under the full knowledge that a few weeks will discover the exact truth, that the statements of Dr. Chalmers as to the opinion of Dr. Lee on this matter are wholly and absolutely contrary to the fact.

In the mean time, I entreat my readers not to proceed on the supposition that things are as Dr. Chalmers has stated them to be. He has the evidence already. He has,—what I have not,—the power of using it as he pleases. He has used it, in a manner, I again say, that no lawyer of character would have stooped to employ; and I challenge him to repeat his assertions after that evidence shall have got into the hands of the public. At present, I believe, he need have nothing to fear from me if he does so. It has been with reluctance that I have entered at all into this my first controversy; and, strong in the justice of my cause, I have no fears of the verdict which, when the evidence is before it, the public will pronounce.

But the material part of the sentence on which I have now been commenting, in so far as regards Dr. Lee is, that in which it is said "He told you, Sir, that he had no favourite theory to support, meaning, I believe, the theory of the Parochial System, which he had before denounced as chimerical—and, of course, the theory of Church Extension as being identified therewith; that he did not agree with his brethren; but that he did not like to come into collision with them, although their views were different from his own. These may not be the words, but they contain the very substance of his declaration, and the effect of which is not to be impaired, Sir, by all the expletives and the qualifying clauses wherewith it is accompanied."

Now, again I say in the most unqualified and the most unhesitating manner, and I do it the more boldly because Dr. Chalmers here admits that he is in possession of evidence *which he has not quoted*, that when that evidence is seen, it will appear that the gloss here given to it, and particularly to the passage beginning "Meaning, *I believe*," is wholly and diametrically the reverse of the truth. Meantime I refer *Dr. Chalmers to the paper* which I have already said Dr. Lee has recently read to me regarding his minor differences with some of his brethren as to the *methods* of carrying *a scheme in which he agrees with them* into effect.

13. Dr. Chalmers then proceeds to say (p. 17)—"I dislike excessively the whole getting up of that evidence, and still more the following of it up afterwards. You had previously obtained a mass of overwhelming testimonies in favour of the Church; but Dr. Lee's evidence, I mean not his parochial but his general evidence on the question at large, was reserved to the last, and was then delivered with all the pomp and circumstance of a closing testimony."

I do not notice this for the purpose of asking how Dr. Chalmers knows that we had obtained a mass of overwhelming testimonies either on the one side or the other, for he must have had many ways of hearing of our proceedings, which were generally held in public. Neither do I mean to intimate whether the Commissioners agree with him in the opinion thus expressed or not. But I notice it for the purpose of simply asking

him whether, as he had previously indicated an idea, that it is the duty of a witness not to tell what he believes to be true, but only what he thinks will be for the benefit of a particular side; he is farther serious in imagining it to be the duty of "*middle men*," as he calls the Commissioners, to hear "an overwhelming mass of testimony" on one side, and then to refuse to hear any or every thing that can be tendered on the other? And I shall tell my Reverend "antagonist," that whatever his fervid nature might have led him to do in such circumstances, the Commissioners would each and all, singly and collectively, have dismissed with silent contempt any proposal that they should follow such a course. As to the circumstance of Dr. Lee having been the last person who was examined, I do not know how the fact stands, nor have I thought it worth while to enquire, for some witness must necessarily be the last. The Rev. Mr. Cunninghame and Mr. Robert Johnstone were present, and suggested questions which were put. And I presume that either they or Dr. Chalmers himself would have been re-examined even then, if any wish to that effect had been expressed.

I enter no farther into the arguments of Dr. Chalmers. He has addressed the remainder of his observations to other parties whom I am not called upon to defend; but I beg, in conclusion, to assure those who may have honoured these pages with a perusal, and who may not have had an opportunity of reading the evidence of Dr. Lee in the Edinburgh and Leith Committee, that when it was read at our private meeting by one of our number, neither he nor any of his auditors could refrain from a compassionate smile at the idea of its being supposed to demonstrate any hostility on the part of Dr. Lee *to the cause of Church Extension, or to the interests of theological education;* and that it can only be so considered by those who entertain the singular idea, that, either with any regard to clearness, or the value of time, witnesses, when under examination, can be permitted to answer questions as to matters of fact, by dissertations on matters of theory, speculation, or opinion, however, important those theories, speculations, or opinions may be in their proper place. And I can only assure Dr. Chalmers that no Court of Justice in the kingdom, and, I suspect, no Parliamentary Committee, not specially appointed to collect *opinions*, would have permitted Dr. Lee to have given such answers as he seems to have expected him to make, any more than they would have held him excusable in stating no facts but such as might operate in one direction.

I have now done with Dr. Chalmers and his Conference. There may be other passages in it which would give me additional "advantages over him;" but I have neither time nor inclination for the dreary and distressing task. I only beg it may be understood that I do most distinctly and solemnly deny every other imputation which any such passages may be supposed to convey. And I presume my readers will not now be surprised at "the sensation of relief which he felt in making his escape from the moral discomforts of the region which he had been traversing," (p. 20.) If, after such an exhibition as he has made in that region, a sitting down in the midst of the Ministers of Edinburgh, or holding a conference with them, shall afford him any relief, I may be surprised, but I shall not attempt to interrupt his repose. Let me therefore con-

clude with hoping, that if I have betrayed any vehemence, it has been "the vehemence of sentiment," not "of passion," and that I have not unnecessarily employed stronger expressions than one gentleman is accustomed to use towards another. To me, as to Dr. Chalmers, my character is of more importance than my life, and the war which he has provoked I trust my countrymen will acquit me of having prosecuted with more anxiety or with less temper than was natural for one who had been so assailed.